

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## President Obama's Statement on Casualties in Afghanistan

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary  
August 6, 2011

### Statement of President Obama on Casualties in Afghanistan

My thoughts and prayers go out to the families and loved ones of the Americans who were lost earlier today in Afghanistan. Their deaths are a reminder of the extraordinary sacrifices made by the men and women of our military and their families, including all who have served in Afghanistan. We will draw inspiration from their lives, and continue the work of securing our country and standing up for the values that they embodied. We also mourn the Afghans who died alongside our troops in pursuit of a more peaceful and hopeful future for their country. At this difficult hour, all Americans are united in support of our men and women in uniform who serve so that we can live in freedom and security.

## Secretary Clinton Says Assad Regime Has Killed More Than 2,000 Since March

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration estimates that the Syrian government is responsible for the death of at least 2,000 of its citizens since demonstrators began calling for greater political freedoms in March, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says.

In her August 4 remarks with Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird in Washington, Clinton said Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has "lost his legitimacy to govern the Syrian people." She urged more countries to join with the United States in trying to increase pressure on Assad's regime to end the violence against its people and allow real democratic reforms.

"We think to date, the government is responsible for the deaths of more than 2,000 people of all ages, and the United States has worked very hard to corral and focus international opinion to take steps toward a unified response to the atrocities that are occurring," Clinton said.

"Sometimes you lose sight of the incredible tragedy unfolding on the streets by just looking at the numbers, which are so numbing, but the shooting death of a 1-year-old recently by the Syrian regime's tanks and troops is a very stark example of what is going on," she said.

Clinton said the Obama administration is committed to increasing the pressure on Syria, including through

additional financial sanctions.

On August 4, the U.S. Treasury Department announced it had prohibited U.S. persons and businesses from engaging in financial or commercial transactions with Syrian parliamentarian and businessman Muhammad Hamsho, as well as his company, Hamsho International Group. The designation also froze any U.S. assets held by Hamsho and his company. The Obama administration has similarly sanctioned President Assad, his brother Mahir al-Assad, and other senior Syrian leaders and businesses with close ties to the regime in response to their violent crackdown against Syrian demonstrators.

"Muhammad Hamsho earned his fortune through his connections to regime insiders, and during the current unrest, he has cast his lot with Bashar al-Assad, Mahir al-Assad and others responsible for the Syrian government's violence and intimidation against the Syrian people," Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen said in an August 4 Treasury Department press release. "The sanctions we are applying today to Hamsho and his company are the direct consequence of his actions."

The press release added that members of the Syrian business community credit Hamsho's business success to his close ties to Syria's ruling elite, and charged that he paid large sums of money to secure his seat in parliament.

Clinton wants to see a broad international coalition speaking out against the violence in Syria and joining the United States in taking action.

"Frankly, we don't have a lot of business with Syria. We need to get Europeans and others. We need to get the Arab states. We need to get a much louder, more effective chorus of voices that are putting pressure on the Assad regime, and we're working to obtain that," she said.

Foreign Minister Baird said the Assad regime's behavior toward its people has been "abhorrent" and "absolutely disgraceful," and he echoed Clinton's call for more countries to pressure the regime to end the violence.

"Regrettably, we don't have the same amount of international support at the U.N. for this, so I think in the absence of that, what we've got to continue to do is to work with like-minded allies," Baird said. "There's no country, I think, who can single-handedly tackle this challenge. We've got to work aggressively with others."

On August 3, the U.N. Security Council approved a presidential statement condemning the Assad regime's violation of human rights and its use of force against its people. Clinton welcomed the move, saying it was a sign that "other governments, other people's voices are

starting to be heard, and we think that's essential."

The secretary said the statement is "the first step of what we hope will be continuing steps to try to unite the world in both our rhetorical outrage" and in "actions that will send a very clear message to the Assad regime, the insiders there, that there's a price to pay for this kind of abuse and attacks on their own people."

U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice told reporters August 3 that the Security Council statement had been "long overdue," but it was "important and strong."

"Finally we were able to speak with one voice in clearly condemning the violence perpetrated against civilians by the Syrian government and call for a halt to the violence and insist that what has transpired is utterly unacceptable," she said.

Rice said the United States had strongly supported a resolution that would have imposed penalties on the Assad regime, but said it was important that the statement had given "a clear and unified condemnation" of the regime's actions.

"We didn't want a split Council and we didn't want a weak statement," she said.

"Hopefully, the people of Syria will get the sense that there are many in the international community, including in the Security Council, who are deeply concerned, profoundly troubled by the violence, who see their efforts and their peaceful protest as just. And the government will hopefully also be chastened by the strength and the unity of the condemnation," Rice said.

### **State's Campbell to Attend Australian-American Conference**

Washington — Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell will lead a U.S. delegation to attend the 19th annual Australian-American Leadership Dialogue, which is being held for the first time in the western Australian city of Perth on August 11.

Campbell, the assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific affairs, arrives in Sydney on August 10 and will meet with experts at the Lowry Institute for International Policy, according to the U.S. State Department.

The institute, founded in 2003, is one of Australia's leading centers for public policy research. Through its research, the Lowry Institute promotes Australia's crucial role in the world.

On August 11 Campbell and a U.S. delegation will travel

to Perth to attend the annual meeting of the Leadership Dialogue. According to news reports, World Bank President Robert Zoellick; Terrence Checki, executive vice president of the New York Federal Reserve Bank and head of its emerging markets and international affairs group; and Air Force Lieutenant General Daniel Darnell, deputy commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, are among the 40 or more U.S. delegates expected to attend the annual conference.

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard is expected to lead her country's delegation, news reports said, along with other political and business leaders.

The Australian-American Leadership Dialogue is a private, nonpartisan organization created in 1991 to promote exchanges between American and Australian leaders from government, the private sector and academia, according to the State Department. It meets annually, alternating between locations in the United States and Australia.

The Leadership Dialogue was founded by Australian businessman Phil Scanlan, according to its website.

### **U.S. Jobs Figures Show Upturn in Economic Recovery**

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer

Washington — The U.S. economy added 117,000 new jobs in July as the unemployment rate ticked down to 9.1 percent, indicating a slight economic upturn as the country continues to recover from the worst recession on record.

The figures, which exceeded economists' expectations, were released in a monthly report by the Commerce Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics August 5. The department's reports are closely monitored by international markets because the performance of the U.S. economy is strongly linked with the health of economies around the world.

"While the better than expected report is welcome news, the unemployment rate remains unacceptably high and faster growth is needed to replace the jobs lost in the downturn," Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Austan Goolsbee said in an August 5 statement.

He called on U.S. leaders to take action by extending both the payroll tax cut and unemployment insurance, and urged them to pass pending free trade agreements and a bipartisan infrastructure bill in a widespread government effort "to help put Americans back to work." The chairman said these steps could help the economy continue to grow, and credited government involvement with helping to add more than 2.4 million private sector jobs during the past 17 months.

Goolsbee also welcomed the increase of 154,000 jobs in total private employment from June to July, and called the growth “broad-based.” According to the report, professional and business services gained 34,000 new jobs, and at least 31,000 jobs were added to health care. Retail trade jumped by about 25,000 jobs, leisure and hospitality services went up by 17,000 and construction added about 8,000.

He said one area of significant growth was manufacturing, which increased in July by 24,000 new jobs. Goolsbee said the industry has added 289,000 jobs since the beginning of 2010, making it the “best period of manufacturing job growth in over a decade.”

Meanwhile, state and local governments accounted for the bulk of jobs lost, decreasing payrolls by 39,000 in July. He said governments have lost more than 400,000 jobs since the start of 2010. Employment declines were also significant in financial activities, which dropped by about 4,000 jobs from June to July.

The report also included upward revisions of the bureau’s previous employment estimates for June and May. June had originally come in at 18,000 new jobs, and was revised up to 46,000. May’s growth had been reported at 25,000, but was revised based on new data up to 53,000.

Economists said that though brighter than before, the three-month average remains well below the numbers needed to cut the unemployment rate. They also said the drop in the July jobless rate may stem from a decline in the labor force, as discouraged job seekers stopped looking for work.

The employment report for August is scheduled to be released September 2 and will include revisions of July’s figures.

### **Twitter Fans Following NASA to Jupiter**

By Brittany Bybee | Staff Writer

Washington — NASA invited Twitter fans representing 28 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Canada, Finland, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom to an August 4–5 event celebrating the launch of the Jupiter-bound Juno spacecraft at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

According to NASA, 150 science and space enthusiasts who follow its Twitter account attended the two-day Tweetup event, which concluded with Juno’s liftoff August 5.

In addition to hosting an international audience at the launch, NASA is collaborating with the Italian Space Agency (ASI) to conduct research on Jupiter. The ASI contributed an infrared instrument and a portion of the

radio science experiment to the Juno mission.

A Tweetup (Twitter meet up) is an informal meeting of people who use the social-networking site Twitter. NASA randomly selected the Tweetup participants from more than 1,200 online applicants. Tweetups provide @NASA followers with the opportunity to go behind the scenes at NASA facilities and events and speak with scientists, engineers, astronauts and managers.

NASA’s goal in holding Tweetups is to provide an opportunity for individuals around the world to experience a rocket launch firsthand and share the event with their local communities.

The agency’s Tweetups range from two hours to two days in length and include a “meet and greet” session to allow participants to gather with fellow Twitter followers and the people behind NASA’s missions.

Juno Tweetup participants spoke with Waleed Abdalati, chief scientist at NASA headquarters; Jim Adams, deputy director of planetary science; Scott Bolton, Juno’s principal investigator; Steve Levin, Juno project scientist; and other members of the Juno Science Team to learn more about Juno.

“The special thing about Juno is we’re really looking at one of the first steps, the earliest time in our solar system’s history,” Bolton said at the Tweetup August 4.

Juno’s primary goal is to improve scientists’ understanding of Jupiter’s formation and evolution and provide new insight into how planetary systems form and develop in our galaxy and beyond.

The spacecraft is expected to arrive at Jupiter in 2016 to investigate the gas giant’s atmosphere and aurora. Juno will spend about a year surveying Jupiter and seeks to look beneath its swirling clouds to explore what lies below.

NASA hosted a similar Tweetup for the launch of the space shuttle Atlantis July 8 and will host the next event September 7–8 for the launch of the two lunar-bound GRAIL spacecraft.

Twitter users who follow @NASA, @NASATweetup and other NASA Twitter accounts are eligible to register for Tweetup events.

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